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ABOUT DIAMONDS.

ALTHOUGH the term 'carat' is applied to Diamonds as well as to gold, it does not mean the same thing. Used with regard to the metal, it expresses quality or fineness—24-carat being pure gold; and 22-carat equal to coined gold. But applied to the diamond, carat means actual weight, and 151½ carats are equal to one ounce troy. The value of a diamond is not merely so much per carat, irrespective of size, but increases in an increasing ratio with the weight of the stone. To give an example. If twenty pounds be the value of a stone of one carat of the 'first water' (that is, colourless and free from brown tinge), a stone of two carats would be worth sixty pounds (or thirty pounds per carat); one of five carats, three hundred and fifty pounds (or seventy pounds per carat); one of ten carats, twenty-two hundred pounds (or two hundred and twenty pounds per carat). Thus it is that when stones are found of a phenomenal size, their value is almost incalculable, and can only be approximately appraised by the most skilful and experienced experts. And thus it is we so often hear of fabulous and utterly impossible valuations of gems.

The diamond is, of course, the hardest of known substances, and its beauty is due to its high refractive power. The object of the skilful cutter is to exhibit this power to the greatest possible advantage. It is about three times as heavy as rock crystal, and will cut glass; but it cannot be cut itself by even a glazier's diamond. What are called 'paste,' or imitation, diamonds are made of a compound of glass and borax, and though they are often very clever deceptions, they never obtain the fire of the real article, and they will never cut glass, however they may scratch it.

There is, however, a kind of false diamond made out of the real article. The less valuable pale-coloured stones are split up, and some colouring matter skilfully introduced by the

lapidary. Then they are cleverly joined up again, and the buyer gets what appears to be a very high-class gem at a comparatively low price. One has to be cautious in buying large stones of unknown history.

What are known in the trade as Doublets are really swindles. They are real stones cemented on the top of glass, and sent away to the diamond fields in Africa, or elsewhere, to be sold to dealers and travellers as 'finds.' The innocent buyers bring them back to England and France for sale as genuine stones, but the application of a file to the back soon reveals the fraud.

The story of the discovery of diamonds in South Africa is now a tolerably familiar one to everybody; but it is not now remembered by many how the first reports were either discredited, or attempted to be explained away, by experts. Thus, in 'The Geological Magazine' for 1868, the whole story of the African diamond discovery was denounced as false, and as an imposture got up by adventurers scheming for capital. It was stated by the writer of the article that the geological character of the district rendered it 'impossible' that diamonds could ever be found there. But the diamonds *were* found, just as the earth *does* move in spite of the embargo laid on Galileo. Then it was explained that the stones must have been brought by ostriches from some distant part of the interior!

It was, perhaps, the discovery of the famous 'Star of South Africa' in 1869 that did as much as anything to silence the sceptics. This wonderful stone was found in the possession of a native medicine-man, who had long used it as a charm, without any idea, of course, of its value as a jewel. It was a pure white diamond of 83½ carats uncut, and it was acquired by a Cape firm for the sum of eleven thousand pounds. It changed hands again, and eventually became the property of the late Countess of Dudley at a cost of twenty-five thousand pounds. What the medicine-man received we

do not remember, if we ever heard; but the fact that gems of such a value had been found suggested the probability of their being found again, and hence the great rush to the Vaal River of diggers of every nationality, resolved to delve to any depth if need be, and not merely potter about the surface, as the first had done. But it is not our purpose here to re-tell the familiar story of the African diamond fields.

The diamond is not only the hardest of known substances, but is also one of the most combustible—a quality which not many people will be disposed to test. It is found of various colours—yellow, brown of various shades, green, blue, pink, orange, opaque, and pure white. The purer the colour, the higher the value. In size, too, the variety is great—from a mere speck like a pin's head to lumps like some of the big finds in Africa. At the De Beers Mine, for instance, was found, in 1889, the famous stone which was shown at the Paris Exposition. It weighed 428½ carats in the rough, and 228½ carats when cut. It measured one inch and seven-eighths in greatest length, and was about an inch and a half square.

Even larger than this remarkable stone is a diamond found in the Jagersfontein Mine in the month of June last year, and named the 'Jagersfontein Excelsior.' This is now the largest and most valuable diamond in the world. It is of blue-white colour, very fine quality, and measures three inches at the thickest part. The gross weight of this unique stone was no less than 969½ carats, and the following are its recorded dimensions: Length, 2½ inches; greatest width, 2 inches; smallest width, 1½ inches; extreme girth in width, 5½ inches; extreme girth in length, 6½ inches. It is impossible to say what is the value of so phenomenal a gem. We do not know that an estimate has been even attempted; but it may easily be half a million if the cutting is successful.

Previous to this discovery, the most famous of the African diamonds was, perhaps, the 'Pam' or 'Jagersfontein' stone, not so much from its size, as because the Queen had ordered it to be sent to Osborne for her inspection with a view to purchase, when the untimely death of the Duke of Clarence put an end to the negotiations. The 'Pam' is only of 55 carats now; but it weighed 112 carats before being cut, and is a stone of remarkable purity and beauty. Its present value is computed at about twenty-five thousand pounds sterling.

A careful estimate, based on all available sources of information, brings out the total weight of diamonds exported from South Africa down to the end of 1892 at fifty million carats, or something over ten tons! The value of this mass of gems would be roughly about seventy millions sterling. If massed together, they would have formed a pyramid six feet high on a base of nine feet square. What a bewildering spectacle it would have been!

The most valuable diamond in the world is (if it is a diamond) the famous 'Braganza' gem belonging to Portugal. It weighed in the rough state 1680 carats, and was valued at upwards

of 5½ millions sterling! The next most valuable (if we except the Jagersfontein Excelsior above described) is the 'Regent,' sometimes called the 'Pitt' diamond. The story of this stone is remarkable. It was discovered by a servant in a mine on the Kistna, in India, and the finder concealed his treasure-trove in a hole which he cut in the calf of his leg and covered over with a bandage—a device which the reader will remember has been adapted in more than one work of fiction. The man escaped with the gem to the coast, and there sold it to a sea-captain for a mere trifle. The mariner in turn sold it to Governor Pitt, grandfather of the Earl of Chatham, at Fort St George, for £1000; and in 1717, Mr Pitt sold it to the Duke of Orleans, Regent of France, for £135,000. It is now valued at £480,000, and is reputed the finest brilliant in the world. Before being cut, it weighed 410 carats, and after cutting with enormous care, 136½ carats. This stone is now among the French jewels in the Museum at Paris.

The famous 'Koh-i-noor' stone is not nearly so valuable as the Regent. It was valued at £140,000, and now weighs 106 carats. The original weight of this beautiful gem is not known; but when presented by the East India Company to the Queen in 1850, it weighed about 186 carats. It was first shown publicly, we believe, at the Great Exhibition of 1851. The cutting was then defective, and the lustre poor. It was the late Prince Consort who advised recutting, after consultation with Sir David Brewster. The work was entrusted to an Amsterdam lapidary, who came to London for the purpose. The recutting took thirty-eight days and cost £8000. The valuation of £140,000 was before this recutting.

The 'Orloff' diamond is one with a romantic history. Once upon a time it was one of the eyes of an Indian idol in a great temple. Then it became the property of the Shah of Persia, and was stolen from him by a French grenadier, who sold it to an English trader for £2000. The Englishman brought it home, and sold it for £12,000 to a Jew, who passed it on at a profit to an Armenian merchant. From the Armenian it was acquired, either by Catharine of Russia, or, for her, by one of her admirers, for £90,000 and a pension. It is now valued at £100,000. It weighs about 194 carats, is about the size of a pigeon's egg, and is of the purest water.

The 'Star of the South' is another famous diamond, now in the possession of one of the Indian Princes. Its original weight was 254½ carats, and in the rough state it was sold for £35,000. When cut down to 125 carats, it was sold for £80,000; but its present value we are unable to state. It is a Brazilian stone, and was found accidentally by a negress in 1853.

The 'Great Mogul' diamond, stolen at the sack of Delhi, is supposed to have been originally part of the rough Koh-i-noor. It is said to have weighed 280 carats, and to have been worth over £400,000.

This is the history of the Great Mogul diamond, according to Dr Brewer. It begins away back in the year 56 before Christ; but skipping over the intervening centuries, we find

it in the possession of the Rajahs of Malwa in the fourteenth century. When Malwa fell before the sultans of Delhi, the diamond changed hands; and when it was among the jewels of the renowned Aurungzebe, it is said to have weighed 793½ carats. We next hear of it as being sent by the Sultan Jihan to Hortensio Borgio, a Venetian lapidary, to be cut. The cutting reduced the stone to 186 carats; and Jihan was so enraged at the waste—as well he might be—that he refused to pay the cost of cutting, and fined the lapidary one thousand rupees besides. There the records fail; but of the Koh-i-noor—supposed to be part of the same stone—we learn that it descended from Aurungzebe to his great-grandson, Mohammed Shah, from whom it was taken by Nadir Shah at the fall of Delhi. From Nadir it passed to Shah Shuja, who carried it to Lahore when driven from Kabul; and at Lahore, the famous Runjeet Singh got hold of it, and had it placed in a bracelet, in 1813. When the Punjab was annexed to the East India Company's territories, the Crown jewels of Lahore were confiscated, and the Koh-i-noor was sent home, and presented by the East India Company to the Queen. Whether the Great Mogul and Koh-i-noor were really originally one and the same stone or not, we are unable to say; but the two names are now attached to two different stones, the one in England, and the other believed to be still in India.

The 'Matan' (belonging to the Rajah of Matan) is a famous Borneo stone, which weighs 367 carats, and has been valued at £270,000. But an English expert who examined it some time ago declares that it is not a diamond at all.

The 'Nizam' is the name of a stone said to have been found in the once famous diamond mines of Golconda. Sir William Hunter, however, gives us to understand that there were really no diamond mines at Golconda, and that the place won its name by cutting the stones found on the eastern borders of the Nizam's territory, and on a ridge of sandstone running down to the rivers Kistna and Godavery, in the Madras Presidency. However that may have been, both regions are now unproductive of valuable stones. The 'Nizam' diamond is said to weigh 340 carats, and to be worth £200,000; but we are unable to verify the figures.

The Russian diamond, 'Moon of Mountains,' is set in the Imperial sceptre, weighs 120 carats, and is valued at 450,000 roubles, or, say, about £75,000. The 'Mountain of Splendour,' belonging to the Shah of Persia, weighs 135 carats, and is valued at £145,000. In the Persian regalia there is said to be another diamond, called the 'Abbas Mirza,' weighing 130 carats, and worth £90,000.

The 'Great Table' is another Indian diamond, the present whereabouts of which is not known. It is said to weigh 242½ carats, and that 500,000 rupees (or at par £50,000) was once refused for it. 'The Great Table' is sometimes known as 'Tavernier's Diamond.' It was the first blue diamond ever seen in Europe, and was brought, in 1642, from India by Tavernier. It was sold to Louis XIV. in 1668, and was described then

as of a beautiful violet colour; but it was flat and badly cut. At what date it was recut we know not, but, as possessed by Louis le Grand, it weighed only 67½ carats. It was seized during the Revolution, and was placed in the Garde Meuble; but it disappeared, and has not been traced since. Some fifty years later, Mr Henry Hope purchased a blue diamond weighing some 44½ carats (now known as the 'Hope Diamond'), which it was conjectured may have been part of the 'Great Table.'

The 'Great Sancy' is a diamond of very peculiar shape, which once belonged, it is supposed, to Queen Elizabeth, and latterly to the Maharajah of Puttiala, in whose possession it was when the Prince of Wales visited India. It was sold on the death of the Maharajah, but is believed to be still in India. The weight of this stone is 53½ carats, and its value about £30,000; but its fame is due chiefly to the very peculiar manner in which it is cut.

Other famous stones are: the 'Austrian Yellow,' belonging to the crown of Austria, weighing 76½ carats, and valued at £50,000; the 'Cumberland,' belonging to the crown of Hanover, weighing 32 carats, and worth at least £10,000; the 'English Dresden,' belonging to the Gaikwar of Baroda, weighing 76½ carats, and valued at £40,000; the 'Nassak'—which the Marquis of Westminster wore on the hilt of his sword at the birthday ceremonial immediately after the Queen's accession—which weighs 78½ carats, and is valued at £30,000.

The most fashionable way of treating diamonds now is what is called the double-cut brilliant. It is also the most expensive. The old style of cutting was in single-cut brilliants of thirty-eight facets.

In the modern-cut brilliant there are fifty-eight facets, which are thus divided: thirty-three on the 'crown' or upper part, and twenty-five on the 'pavilion' or under part. The portion between the 'crown' and the 'pavilion' is called the 'girdle,' and is usually concealed by the setting.

The art of cutting and polishing diamonds is a very old one in the East; and the early jewellers of India and China knew how to dress diamonds by means of diamond dust long before Europeans did. It was a Belgian lapidary, one Berguin of Bruges, who accidentally discovered, in 1456, how one diamond can be employed to polish another. It was he who constructed the first polishing-wheel, wherewith, by means of diamond-powder, he could dress diamonds as well as other stones could be dressed by emery.

We have mentioned the combustible quality of the diamond—which, chemically speaking, is but a variety of the mineral coal. The reader will not be any more disposed to test another reputed quality of the most precious of all gems. According to the Mohammedans of Southern India, pulverised diamond is the least painful, the most active, and the most certain of all poisons. According to Wilks's 'History,' the powder of diamonds is kept on hand (by the wealthy only, presumably) as a last resource. But a belief in the poisonous character of the diamond also existed in Italy in the sixteenth century (see, for instance, the story of Benve-

nuto Cellini); and it also prevailed in Northern India, according to Burnes, who wrote in 1834.

Let us conclude by a remarkable quotation from Sir Thomas Browne, the sage exploder of *Vulgar Errors*: 'We hear it in every mouth, and in many good authors read it, that a diamond, which is the hardest of stones, not yielding unto steel, emery, or anything but its own powder, is yet made soft or broke by the blood of a goat. . . . But this I perceive is rather affirmed than proved; for lapidaries, and such as possess the art of curing this stone, do generally deny it; and they that seem to countenance it have in their deliveries so qualified it that little from thence of moment can be inferred from it.'

That the diamond is a poison was only allowed by the learned Doctor as in the same sense that glass is a poison—a conceit, he says, founded upon the visible mischief of glass grossly or coarsely powdered—for that indeed is mortally noxious, and effectually used by some to destroy mice and rats.'

AT MARKET VALUE.*

CHAPTER XXV.—THE MEETING.

ARNOLD WILLOUGHBY arrived at Kathleen Hesslegrave's door in a tremor of delight, excitement, and ecstasy. During all those long months that he had been parted from her, he had loved her with his whole soul—loved the memory of the girl he had once believed her, even though that girl, as he fancied, never really existed. And now that her letter to Rufus Mortimer had once more reinstated her image in his mind as he first imagined her, his love came back to him with a rush, even more vividly than ever. For had he not now in her own very handwriting the assurance that she loved him—the assurance that she was his, be he present or absent? He could approach her at last without any doubts on that subject. He could be sure of her answering love, her real affection for himself, whatever might be the explanation of those strange expressions Mrs Hesslegrave had attributed to her that afternoon in Venice.

He mounted the stairs in a fever of joy and suppressed expectation. Kathleen sat in her little drawing-room, waiting anxiously for the promised second telegram from Rufus Mortimer. A knock at the outer portal of the flat aroused her, all tremulous. Could that be the telegraph boy? She held her room door half ajar, and listened for the voice. When it came, it sent a thrill of surprise, delight, and terror down her spine like a cold wave. 'Is Miss Hesslegrave in?' it said; but the tone—the tone was surely Arnold Willoughby's!

'Miss Hesslegrave is engaged this afternoon, sir, and can't see anybody,' the maid answered demurely. For Kathleen felt too agitated, with hope and suspense, for receiving visitors.

'I think she'll see me,' Arnold replied with a confident smile; and while the girl still hesi-

tated, Kathleen's own voice broke out from within in very clear tones: 'Let the gentleman come in, Mary.'

At sound of her voice, a strange thrill passed through Arnold Willoughby in turn; he rushed along the passage and burst into the sitting-room. There stood Kathleen, pale and panting, with one hand on a chair, and one on her throbbing heart—much thinner and whiter than he had known her of old—much thinner and whiter, but not one whit less beautiful. In that first tumult of wild delight at his love restored, Arnold Willoughby darted forward, and for the first time in his life would have clasped her in his arms and kissed her as she stood there. But Kathleen, looking hard at him, and recognising in a second how ill and wasted he was, with his maimed arm hanging loose by his side in its helplessness, yet waved him back from her at once with an imperious gesture. 'No, no,' she said proudly, conquering her love with an effort. 'Not now, not now, Arnold! Once I would have let you, if you wished; and still even to-day—oh, my heart, my poor heart—I could willingly let you—if it were not for that barrier. But the barrier is there even now; and until you understand everything—until you know I was never what you have thought me so long—I can't possibly allow you. I don't want you to trust me; I don't want you to believe me; I want you to know—to know and understand; I want you to see for yourself how you have wronged me.'

Arnold's face was all penitence. As she spoke, so fearlessly and so proudly, yet with such an undercurrent of tenderness, he wondered to himself how he could ever have doubted her.

'Oh Kathleen,' he cried, standing back a pace, and stretching out his hands, and calling her for the first time to her face by the name she had always borne in his thoughts and his day-dreams, 'don't say that to me, please. Don't crush me so utterly. I know how wrong I have been; I know how much I have misjudged you. But don't visit it too heavily upon me. I have suffered for it myself; see, see how I have suffered for it!—and you don't know yet how difficult it was for me to resist the conclusion. After what I was told, my darling, my heart's love, I could hardly think otherwise.'

'I know that,' Kathleen answered, standing opposite him and trembling, with a fierce desire to throw herself at once into her lover's arms, only just restrained by a due sense of her womanly dignity. 'If I didn't know it, Mr Willoughby—or Arnold, if you will—I wouldn't allow you to come here: I wouldn't allow you to speak to me. I would guard my pride better. It's *because* I know it that I'm going to explain all now to you. It's *because* I know it that I'm going to lay my heart bare like an open book in front of you. Before I hear anything else—before I even ask what that means!—and she glanced at his useless hand with unspoken distress—'we must clear up this mystery. Till the misunderstanding's cleared, we can't talk about anything else as we ought to one another. And in order to

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clear it up, I shall tell you—just everything. I shall open my whole soul. I shall tear my heart out for you. There's no room for reserve between us two to-day. We must understand one another, once for all, oh Arnold, my Arnold, now I've found you, I've found you!

Arnold gazed at her, and melted with shame and remorse. Her passion overcame him. How could he ever for one moment have doubted that pure, that queenly soul? But then—Mrs Hesslegrave's words! that dark saying about the earldom! those strange mysterious hints of a deliberate conspiracy!

'You thought I knew from the first who you were?' Kathleen began, drawing breath and facing him boldly.

'I thought you believed from the first I was Lord Axminster,' Arnold answered, quite frankly, but still refusing to commit himself; 'and I thought it was through that belief alone that you first permitted a common sailor to win his way as far as he did, if he did, into your affections. But, Kathleen, I won't think so now; if you tell me you didn't, I'll believe you at once; and if you tell me you did, but that you loved me for myself, though you took me for ten thousand times over an Earl, oh Kathleen, I will believe you: I will believe you and love you, with all my heart and soul, if only you'll allow me.'

It was a great deal for Arnold Willoughby, with his past behind him, to say; but it wasn't enough for Kathleen. She was still unsatisfied. She stood before him, trembling and quivering all over with love, yet just waving him back with one imperious hand when he strove to draw nearer to her. 'No, no,' she answered, holding him off with her queenly gesture. 'That's not what I want. I want plainly to clear myself. I want you to know, to be sure and certain, beyond the shadow of a doubt, I was not what you took me for. I want you to understand the whole real truth. I want you to see for yourself what I thought of you first; I want you to see when I began to love you—for I *did* love you, Arnold, and I *do* love you still—and how and when I first discovered your real name and personality.' She moved across the room from where she stood to a desk in the corner. 'Read this,' she said simply, taking out a diary and handing it to him. 'Begin there, on the day I first met you in London. Then turn on to these pages where I put this mark, and read straight through till you come to the end—when you went away from Venice. The end of everything for me—till you came again this evening.'

It was no time for protestations. Arnold saw she was in earnest. He took the book and read. Meanwhile, Kathleen sank into an easy-chair opposite and watched his face eagerly as he turned over the pages.

He read on and on in a fever of delight. He read how she had come upon him in Venice in Mortimer's gondola. He read how she had begun to like him, in spite of doubts and hesitations: how she had wondered whether a lady ought to let herself grow so fond of a man so far beneath her in rank and station: how she had stifled her doubts by saying to

herself he had genius and refinement and a poet's nature; he was a gentleman, after all, a true gentleman at heart, a gentleman of the truest in feelings and manners. Then he saw how the evidences of her liking grew thicker and thicker from page to page, till they deepened at last into shamefaced self-confessions of maiden love, and culminated in the end into that one passionate avowal, 'Sailor or no sailor, oh, I love him, I love him. I love him with all my heart; and if he asks me, I shall accept him.'

When he came to that page, Kathleen saw by the moisture rising thick in his eyes what point he had reached. He looked across at her imploringly. 'Oh Kathleen, I may?' he cried, trying to seize her hand. But still Kathleen waved him back. 'No, not yet,' she said in a tone half relenting, half stern. 'Not yet. You must read it all through. You must let me prove myself innocent.'

She said it proudly yet tenderly, for she *knew* the proof was there. And after all she had suffered, she did not shrink for a moment from letting Arnold so read her heart's inmost secret.

He read on and on. Then came at last that day when the Canon recognised him in the side canal by San Giovanni e Paolo. Arnold drew a deep breath. 'It was *he* who found me out, then?' he said, for the first time admitting his long-hidden identity.

'Yes, it was he who found you out,' Kathleen answered, leaning forward. 'And I saw at once he was right; for I had half suspected it myself, of course, from those words of yours he quoted. And, Arnold, do you know, the first thought that crossed my mind—for I'm a woman, and have my prejudices—the first thought was this: "Oh, how glad I am to think I should have singled him out for myself, out of pure, pure love, without knowing anything of him; yet that he should turn out in the end to be so great a gentleman of so ancient a lineage." And the second thing that struck me was this: "Oh, how sorry I am, after all, I should have surprised his secret; for he wished to keep it from me; he wished perhaps to surprise me; and it may grieve him that I should have learnt it like this prematurely." But I never knew then what misery it was to bring upon me.'

'Kathleen,' the young man cried imploringly, 'I *must*! I *must*, this time!' And he stretched his arms out to her.

'No,' Kathleen cried, still waving him back, but flushing rosy red: 'I am not yet absolved. You must read to the very end. You must know the whole truth of it.'

Again Arnold read on; for Kathleen had written at great length the history of that day, that terrible day, much blotted with tears on the pages of her diary, when the Canon went away, and her mother 'spoiled all' with Arnold Willoughby. When he came to that heart-broken cry of a wounded spirit, Arnold rose from his place; he could contain himself no longer. With tears in his eyes, he sprang towards her eagerly. This time, at last, Kathleen did not prevent him. 'Am I absolved?' she murmured low, as he caught her in his arms and kissed her.

And Arnold, clasping her tight, made answer through his tears: 'My darling, my darling, it's I, not you, who stand in need of absolution. I have cruelly wronged you. I can never forgive myself for it.'

'But I can forgive you,' Kathleen murmured, nestling close to him.

For some minutes they sat there, hand in hand, supremely happy. They had no need for words in that more eloquent silence. Then Arnold spoke again, very sadly, with a sudden reminder of all that had happened meanwhile: 'But, Kathleen, even now, I ought never to have spoken to you. This is only to ease our souls. Things are still where they were for every other purpose. My darling, how am I to tell you it? I can never marry you now. I have only just recovered you, to lose you again instantly.'

Kathleen held his hand in hers still. 'Why so, dear?' she asked, too serenely joyous now (as is a woman's wont) at her love recovered, to trouble her mind much about such enigmatic sayings.

'Because,' Arnold cried, 'I have nothing to marry you with; and this maimed hand—it was crushed in an iceberg accident this summer—I'll tell you all about it by-and-by—makes it more impossible than ever for me to earn a livelihood. Oh Kathleen, if I hadn't been carried away by my feelings, and by what that dear good fellow Mortimer told me—he showed me your letter—I would never have come back like this to see you without some previous explanation. I would have written to tell you beforehand how hopeless it all was, how helpless a creature was coming home to claim you.'

'Then I'm glad they *did* carry you away,' Kathleen answered, smiling; 'for I'd ten thousand times rather see you yourself, Arnold, now everything's cleared up, than any number of letters.'

'But everything's *not* cleared up; that's the worst of it,' Arnold answered somewhat gloomily. 'At least as far as I'm concerned,' he went on in haste, for he saw a dark shadow pass over Kathleen's sweet face. 'I mean, I'm afraid I'm misleading you myself now. You think, dear Kathleen, the man who has come home to you is an English peer; practically and financially, he's nothing of the sort. He's a sailor at best, or not even a sailor, but the merest bare wreck of one. Here, a sheer hulk, stands Arnold Willoughby. You probably imagine I got rid of my position and masqueraded in seaman's clothes, out of pure, pure fun, only just to try you. I did nothing of the sort, my darling. I renounced my birthright, once and for ever, partly on conscientious grounds, and partly on grounds of personal dignity. I may have done right; I may have done wrong; but, at any rate, all that's long since irrevocable. It's past and gone now, and can never be reconsidered. It's a closed chapter. I was once an Earl: I am an Earl no longer. The man who asks you—who dare hardly ask you—for your love to-day, is, to all intents and purposes, mere Arnold Willoughby, a common sailor, unfit for work, and an artist too hopelessly maimed for any further painting. In

short, a man without fixed occupation or means of livelihood.'

Kathleen clung to his hand. 'I knew as much already,' she answered bravely, smoothing it with her own. 'That is to say, at least, I knew from the day you went away from Venice, and still more from the day when your cousin's claim was allowed to hold good by the House of Lords, that you had relinquished once for all your right to the peerage. I knew a man so just and good as you are would never allow your cousin to assume the title as his own, and then rob him again of it. I knew that if ever you came back to me, it would be as plain Arnold Willoughby, fighting your own battle on equal terms against the world; and, Arnold, now you're here, I don't care a pin on what terms or under what name you come; it's enough for me to have you here again with me!'

'Thank you, Kathleen,' Arnold said very low, with a thrill of deep joy. 'My darling, you're too good to me.'

'But that's not all,' Kathleen went on with swimming eyes. 'Do you know, Arnold, while you were away, what I wanted you to come back for most was that I might set myself right with you; might make you admit I wasn't ever what you thought me; might justify my womanhood to you; might be myself once more to you. But see what a woman I am, after all! Now you're here, oh, my darling, it isn't *that* that I think about, nor even whether or not you'll ever be able to marry me; all I think of is simply this—how sweet and delightful and heavenly it is to have you here again by my side to talk to.'

She gazed at him with pure love in those earnest big eyes of hers. Arnold melted with joy. 'You speak like a true good woman, darling,' he answered in a penitent voice. 'And now I hear you speak so, I wonder to myself how on earth I could ever have had the heart to doubt you.'

So they sat and talked. One hour like that was well worth those two years of solitude and misery.

CHESTNUTTING IN THE APENNINES.

I
Stretched my faint limbs beneath the hoary stem,
Which an old chestnut flung athwart the steep
Of a green Apennine.

SHELLEY.

SUCH my position as I write! And many an hour have I spent thus when weary with climbing mountain roads, grateful for the shade which some gnarled limb, wide-spreading and sumptuously clad, has kindly cast over me. But on this 24th of November, a marvellous Indian summer's day, the sun is shining through, and I would that the tree were at present clad in more than a couple of burs and a half-dozen leaves. We are near the close of the Chestnutting season. Chestnutting! magical word, which has power to bring a sparkle of anticipatory pleasure and a bright look of eagerness into the eyes of youth! But one season of the 'sport' as indulged in on this Apennine might disrobe it of much of its charm—might

possibly satisfy the cravings of a boyish lifetime.

It was early in July that I entered this region of the chestnut, and fell beneath its spell, not knowing then as well as I do now the interpretation of the word. Whatever it signify in other parts of the world—sport, or simply stale joke—hereabouts it means work, and a plentiful supply; moreover, according as the crop is good or the reverse, it means food or semi-starvation.

Nearly four months have passed since we bade farewell to railroads and towns, and started on a twenty-two-mile ride up this mountain from Pistoia. After a half-hour or so, the complexion of the landscape changed; the dull hue—almost a sickly one, though silvery when wind-stirred—of the myriad olive-trees of the Tuscan plain had been exchanged for a richer, warmer colouring, and when we reached our summer quarters, we were in the very midst of the chestnut country. North, south, east, and west, as far as eye could travel, save on the pine-clad mountain tops, the slopes and steepes were clothed in the one garment, deep, glossy green, generously trimmed with a rich creamy tint, for the trees were in fullest blossom. The peasants were full of interest in the promised fine crop, a promise which I can now affirm has been faithfully fulfilled. If I arrived not in time to see the bare branches put forth leaves, certainly every other stage of development in the yearly life of a chestnut tree has been forcibly impressed on my mind. I have noted how the strong ribbed leaves grow out one above the other, following an easily imagined spiral line, on those slender branches which in time of need serve so capably as switches!

I have watched the birds, at home and happy, nested on high, well-nigh hidden by the foliage so dense. I have almost seen the burs take form at the base of the queer long blossoms, and have felt that they flung the refuse bloom in derision at me, when no longer of use to them. Ay, indeed the bur is a saucy fellow from first to last! And there is a dried, last year's one under me now! Ugh! you spiteful thing! I think to have tossed you away, only to find you have left no end of spines imbedded in my shawl!

And at last I have seen these tough customers burst and disgorge their sweets. Ah, what a feast! But they are from nature sadly stubborn, loth to give up what they have so long nursed and reared; and many need severe chastisement ere they resign their plump charges. Rain, wind, even Jack Frost's touch prove oft-times insufficient. Dashed to the earth, not a few still cling tenaciously to their toothsome treasure, and it would seem that they take a fiendish delight in pricking raw the fingers which are forced to handle them.

It is on account of the chestnuts that the village school is in session all summer. Vacation commences the first of October, and ends with November, in order that the children may—not rest and play—but work hard helping their parents at the *raccolla*, as the gathering of the nuts is called. This year they began to fall early in October, and the last one has not dropped yet. Each peasant family owns its

chestnut grove, called a *selva*, which supplies them with food and fuel; or, if too poor to own a *selva*, they 'gather' for some more well-to-do peasant, who may own a very large one, or perhaps two or three in various parts of the country, and they receive in payment one-half of the nuts brought in. Many *selvas* are far removed from the village, and the gatherers must start before daybreak and walk several miles, in order to begin work with the dawn; and they continue it as long as they can see, especially if the weather is not good, for it harms the fruit—as it is called—to lie long in the wet.

If you kindly permit, I will describe our visit to a *selva*. A two-mile climb brought us to a steep part of the mountain, where the ground was rudely terraced. There Natale, the head of his house, came forward and gave us greeting, mannerly after Italian fashion, although he was encumbered with clumsy wooden implements—a short-handled rake in one hand, and a large-headed mallet in the other. He wore a canvas apron, made double and open a little at the top so as to form a ready receptacle for the nuts as found. His apron was about full. 'Come up to the *metato* [drying-house],' he said. And we followed him over an acre or two of rough hillside, he picking up nuts as he spied them, and keeping us waiting while he pounded open an occasional close-fisted bur with his mallet. He was gracious enough not to stop and rake aside all the leaves for thorough search. Finally, we came to a low, rude stone building, the *metato*, and Natale emptied his store of nuts into a large sack, saying: 'When this is filled, I will empty it up in the loft.' Then he added a few chestnut logs to a blazing fire in the centre of the ground-floor.

'But where is the goodwife Vittoria?' we inquired.

'Oh, she is away over on the west border.—Here, Fulvio! Fulvio!' he called lustily, stepping outside the door; and a reply came from far down east: 'Sì, sì, babbo! Cosa vuoi?' (Yes, yes, papa! What wilt thou?) And in a few moments a long-limbed, loose-jointed boy, armed as his father was, came slouching up the hill, munching chestnuts, and not bothering himself to gather any but those that showed plump and russet, without effort on his part.

'Only half an apronful in all this time, Fulvio?' was his father's greeting. 'Drop them in the sack and run—run; stretch your legs for once, and tell mamma the Signorine have come!'

We remonstrated, however, insisting that, instead, we be permitted to visit Vittoria where she was at work.

'Wait, then, Signorine! First, we will have some *ballotti*, eh? I will soon have them cooked.'

On our declining the 'boiled chestnuts,' Natale urged us to sample his drying ones; and disappearing up a ladder, he soon returned with some large-sized specimens from the region above our heads, and we found them hard and sweet. He then undertook to pilot us; and after traversing more acres, we found his wife, equipped in like manner, busily at work.

'Not so bad, this work, when the sun shines as to-day?' I said inquiringly.

'Oh, but the nuts fall much more quickly when it storms!' was the reply.

'A fine crop this year, eh, Vittoria?'

'Truly fine, Signorina; but slow in the gathering. Last year, we had but eighteen ever fall, there will be three times that number.'

She accompanied us as far as the frontier of their domain, and directed us how to reach the road *viâ* the selva of the 'Old Rat,' as one of the village worthies was dubbed.

The 'gathering,' viewed as above, and for only an hour, appeared a pleasant enough occupation; but when, soon thereafter, the rainy season set in, I saw what wrung my heart with pity. Night after night did the peasants return, dripping wet and chilled to the bone, their fingers numbed and raw, more pricked than those of the most overworked seamstress of olden time. And yet when, one rainy evening, feeling blue for want of something to do, we took our next neighbours by surprise, we found such cheer as restored our drooping spirits. A right merry group was assembled in the low, dingy kitchen, which was paved with irregular stones. A wood-fire blazed in the wide chimney-place, and Natale was roasting chestnuts. Vittoria and two visitors—Armida, her married daughter, and Cousin Pellegrina—sat in a row, upright on a bench at one side near the fire; and within the chimney-place—one on either side of the fire—sat the boy Fulvio and the son-in-law, Giuseppe. As we opened the door without ceremony, a hearty laugh greeted our ears, and a pleasing picture our eyes, illuminated solely by firelight. Of course we were welcomed; and ere long, seated on rush-bottomed chairs near the fire, we and all were enjoying the chestnuts. Delicious indeed! for they were done to a turn.

No doubt, the Italian urchin abroad gives us the best he can, working over charcoal; but for the perfection of a roast, a huge blazing fire is needed, a large, long-handled pan two-thirds full of chestnuts, and—Natale to keep them tossing with never a nut spilled over!

'Eight chestnuts is about a meal, I reckon; if I eat ten, I am apt to regret it!' So spake I; then inquired: 'How many canst thou eat, Fulvio? Forty, perhaps?'

'Forty!' and the boy laughed scornfully. 'Forty *di certo*, Signorina—and many more than forty.'

But then it was his supper, poor boy.

Supper at this season may be varied delightfully. There are three ways of preparing fresh chestnuts: *ballotti* (the boiled), *arrostiti* (the roasted), and *tegliate*, which as yet I fail to appreciate. The nuts are first shelled, then boiled with a quantity of caraway seeds, to give them flavour, the consequence being that the chestnut flavour is wanting. But if I wish to eat *necci*, the delicacy *par excellence*, the goal which the *raccolta* has ever in view, I shall be obliged to remain here well into December.

After the nuts are thoroughly dried—and it takes some weeks of piling on wood at the *metato* to accomplish this—they are ground at the mill, and the flour supplies the main food of the poor peasantry all winter. *Necci* are simply flat cakes made of this flour mixed with

water—no salt; it is dear in Italy, the tax being heavy—and baked between heated flat stones, with chestnut leaves next the cakes, to prevent their sticking to the stones. These leaves, gathered by thousands fresh from the trees in September, are soaked before using. It gives the village grandams—of which rather shrunken and diminutive creature there seems a fair supply here—a rest from spinning to string the leaves when gathered and hang them up to dry. To my unenlightened idea, these lengthy festoons, which for some days adorned the cottage doorways, appeared something of the nature of a Christmas decoration.

Necci, morning, noon, and night, will assuredly be the winter portion of the peasant-folk hereabouts. For me, one will in all probability suffice; but one, at least, I mean to taste ere leaving this land of the chestnut for the olive slopes below.

THE TENDERFOOT INK-SLINGER.

CHAPTER III.—CONCLUSION.

ON the Dawson Ridge, Lemuel dismounted, hitched the mare to a sapling, and proceeded to make a close inspection of the place where Chaparral Dick had left the track to conceal his horse in the brush. There was no difficulty in finding the precise spot. A trail of broken twigs and trodden undergrowth led him to the point where, twenty or thirty yards from the road, the horse had been tied to a tree, from which it had nibbled portions of bark. Near here, Lemuel made two important discoveries. From a branch of thorn he picked a fragment of scarf which had, evidently unnoticed, caught on the sharp pricks, and placed it carefully in his pocket. The other find was a small patch of mucky ground upon which the horse had left the clear, sharp imprint of its hoofs. He knelt down to examine the impression more closely, and when he rose, the flush of assured triumph was on his face.

Springing into the saddle again, he hurried forward, and never drew rein until he pulled up at Chaparral Ranch. As he approached the farmstead, nobody appeared to be about; but Dick's pony—the black one he had ridden the night before—was grazing close by, tethered to a post, to be in readiness if wanted. Glancing carefully round, to make sure that he was not observed, Lemuel sprang to the ground and went up to the pony. The animal did not resent his interference, allowing him to lift up its off hind-foot without remonstrance. One glance was sufficient to satisfy him. Then he led the mare up to the building, and while hitching her to a ring in the wall, the owner of the ranch made his appearance at the door, looking, as The Flower had prognosticated, 'purty well chawed up.'

The rancher looked surprised as he recognised his visitor.

'You don't look very bright this morning, Dick,' the latter began.

'You can't expect a man to be over chiffe as hez been up all night, not to mention the worry o' thisyer job on the Ridge.'

'How did it happen?' asked Lemuel, with assumed carelessness.

'Thet's wot Jake Brownson wants to know. Ez fur me, I don't allow to offer any opinion. I only know I come across him on the track onsensible, an' druv him down to Breckenridge City. Howsomever I reckon thet ain't wot you borrowed Bill Higgins's roan mare to come out here fur. Come in an' liquor!'

'No; thanks! Fact is, I've come with a message. The Vigilantes have met this morning at Higgins's. It seems they've got hold of some sort of a clue as to who it was that robbed Jake, and they swear they'll string him up if they can prove it against him.'

Chaparral Dick's face turned a shade paler, and he gave the other a keen, searching look. Lemuel, though his heart was beating violently, knew that all depended on his keeping up a show of innocence, and went on with an air of consummate ingenuousness: 'They don't wish it to be known until they are sure of their man. So Buck Wagner wants you to ride back with me, and meet him at my hut (which is quiet and out of the way, and where there is no danger of the thing getting blown) to compare notes, and see how your evidence fits in with the clue.'

Then followed a moment of intense suspense for Lemuel; but—his suspicion completely disarmed, and confident that the Vigilantes had stumbled on a false trail—the fish took the bait. The black pony was saddled up, and the two prepared to start. It was now more than half-past twelve, and they had fully an hour's ride before them. Half-way to the summit of the Ridge they left the turnpike and took to the steep, rough track which led close past the hut to an old abandoned mine half a mile beyond. It was less than half an hour to the appointed time when they reached the shanty.

Fastening their horses to the nearest pine, Lemuel was about to lead his unsuspecting guest inside, when the latter suddenly stopped on the threshold, and, shading his eyes with his hand, gazed long and anxiously in the direction where a portion of the road winding down to Breckenridge City was visible. In the distance, several horsemen, followed by straggling groups on foot, were plainly to be seen making their way up the grade.

'Wot's up yonder?' exclaimed Chaparral Dick, striving to suppress a growing feeling of uneasiness.

'Those are the Vigilantes,' replied Lemuel, who was standing a yard or two farther back within the doorway, with a mocking ring in his voice; 'and they're coming here to swing the cur who lassoed and robbed Jake Brownson!'

In a flash, the rancher recognised that his misdeeds were known, and that he had been decoyed. As he wheeled round, his hand instinctively went for his revolver; but Lemuel was prepared for this, and already had him covered with his weapon, his finger on the trigger. 'Up with your hands instantan, Chaparral Dick, or I'll blow daylight into you,' he cried.

It is somewhat trying, even to the strongest nerves, to take an accurate sight along the barrel of a business-like revolver from the

muzzle end, when you can count the bullets glistening dully in the chambers, and you know a hostile finger rests upon the trigger; and Chaparral Dick recognised his imminent peril, and reluctantly threw up his hands.

'Perhaps it would be as well if I relieved you of that gun,' observed Lemuel; and, taking care never to leave his man uncovered for an instant, he approached him until the muzzle touched his temple, and quietly possessed himself of the pistol. 'Now,' he continued, slowly retiring a few steps, 'you sit there—and sit tight, too—until the Vigilance Committee arrive, or, as certain as I live, I'll spare them the trouble of hanging a dog!'

Chaparral Dick laughed a mirthless laugh, as he took his seat on the stool indicated, and tried to affect an air of easy nonchalance; but the attempt was a failure. 'For a Tenderfoot,' he said, 'you're mighty ready to unload some lead. You 'pear to hev got the drop on me conse'kens o' suthin'. Wot's it all about, Lem?'

'You know well enough what it's about,' returned the other in deadly earnest. 'You know who hid his pony in the brush at the summit of the grade, and waited for Jake to come along in his wagon! You know who lassoed him from out of the shadow of the scrub, and pulled him off the wagon on to the road! You know who crept up to him and rifled his pockets of the bag of dollars; and then lifted him into the wagon, and drove him down to Breckenridge City, to throw off any chance of suspicion! Yes, you know all that, Chaparral Dick; and so do I, for I watched it all with my own eyes!'

The culprit's eyes bulged from his head in sheer amaze as, one by one, his black actions were unfolded to him. 'It's a lie! You can't prove it!' he exclaimed hoarsely. 'I hedn't no hand in robbin' Jake Brownson, an' I never took my pony into the scrub!'

'Then, mebbe, you'll say this bit of scarf, I found on the thorns twenty yards from the track, doesn't match that you have on now? And, mebbe, too, you don't know that your pony has lost a nail out of his off hind-shoe, and that there's the clear print of a pony's shoe, with the same nail missing, on a patch of mire close to where you hitched him up! There's many a man been strung up on less evidence than that!'

Chaparral Dick was on the point of suddenly springing to his feet, when he caught the fierce gleam in Lemuel's eyes, and that, together with the sight of the revolver still levelled at him, cowed him. He turned an ashen colour, and every vestige of bravado left him. Physically, he was a courageous man. Many a time he had looked death in the face without flinching. Yet, before this man, whom he had always regarded as a poor, weak, unsophisticated fool, but whom he now saw transformed, by some strange power, into a stern, fierce, human wolf, he quailed. Weaker in body, though far superior in will-power, Garvey now held the strong man there more by the force of his set determination than by bodily fear, as the serpent is said to transfix his prey by some subtle power.

'In twenty minutes, if they leave their horses on the Ridge and come up through the scrub,

the Vigilantes will be here. You had better think of your future, and try to make your peace with Heaven," said Garvey grimly.

"Lem! Lem!" groaned the unhappy man, "I allow ez all you've said is correct. I'm a black, God-forsaken scoundrel; but don't use your power agen me—don't, for Heaven's sake! Gimme a chance!"

Lemuel was obdurate.

"For The Flower's sake?" entreated Chaparral Dick.

"For The Flower's sake!" repeated the other unconsciously aloud. The fierce unnatural light partially faded from his eyes, and, though he still held his weapon carefully poised, the muscles of his face relaxed slightly.

"Yes, for Flossie's sake! I reckon you love her nigh ez much ez I do. But it's me she loves; an' ef you give me away to the Vigilantes, you'll kill her, sure's they'll string me up. I've been a durned, unworthy skunk, Lem! I neglected the ranch to go galooting about; an' when I got pressed an' hedn't the chips to settle with, I took to the road.—Keep it dark, Lem, for Flossie's sake, an' you'll never regret it! I'll be a new man—I swear I will, s'elp me! For the sake of Flossie's happiness, Lem!"

"I told her I would give my life for her happiness!" was the thought which flashed through Garvey's brain. Yes; but would it be for her happiness to give away this fear-stricken wretch's life, who, whatever other form of punishment he deserved, had certainly not merited death. If Flossie's whole heart was given to this man, could he (Lemuel) ever hope to win it?

"For the sake of Flossie's happiness!" Could he do it? Perhaps the spasm of sharp pain that passed just then through his chest helped him to decide.

"Dick," he said in softer tones, "I love The Flower better than I do my life. I told her so this morning, and she told me that she was promised to you. You've been nearer Kingdom Come during the last few minutes than ever you were before; and I'd have sent you slick there with my own hands, rather than you should have married her and made her young life miserable. You can make her happy if you will—and something tells me now that you will. Swear to me that, hereafter, your life shall be worthy of her! and no man shall ever know from me what took place last night on the Ridge. If you can, tell her all, and you'll be all the better for it after."

"I will! I'll make a clean breast of it to her! I swear it, Lem!" cried Chaparral Dick, fervently grasping the hand that was now held out to him. The two men stood for a moment and looked into each other's eyes, and in that brief exchange of glances Lemuel saw right down into the other's soul and was satisfied.

"Now go, Dick, before the Committee come," he said quietly. "If they saw you here, the circumstance might possibly throw suspicion in your direction, after what I told them this morning. Go to Flossie, and tell her all as soon as you can; and rest assured that in some way I will remove every chance of them getting on your track. I believe the happiness

of the one girl who is more than all the world to me rests in your hands, and may God deal with you as you do with her!" And Chaparral Dick sprang into the saddle and disappeared by the way he had come.

"For the sake of Flossie's happiness!" Garvey murmured to himself, as he sat down on the log outside the door of his hut.

When the Vigilance Committee found him there a few minutes afterwards, he looked gray and haggard, as though a score of winters had been added to the tale of his life.

"Wall, Mister Garvey, I don't see thisyer white-livered greaser ez we're here to assist with his leetle tight-rope pformance?" began Buck Wagner blandly, as the expectant crowd gathered in front of the hut. "Ez I remarked afore, in a sorter keerless, general way, I hopes you ain't a-tryin' to play it off on us, fur I've got a derring here ez'll trump that trick every time."

"He's here," said Lemuel, with a faint smile on his wan face.

"Then I beg parding; but you've ruther got the bulge on me, fur I don't see him. But ef you hev got him, then I calls upon you, in the name of the lor—or the Vigilance Committee, which I take it is *our* lor—to perdooce the varmint, so's we kin start thisyer show."

"He is before you: I am the man!" Lemuel replied. His face was ghastly to look upon, and his eyes were full of a strange, wild light; but no tremor of fear shook his frame, and his words rang out clear and distinct.

For an instant the crowd swayed back in sheer astonishment, unable for the moment to grasp the meaning of the words. Then their aspect changed to one of fierce anger; and the tragedy would quickly have been played out to the bitter end, had not Buck held them back with an authoritative gesture, accentuated by a tap of his hip-pocket, that nobody cared to disregard.

"Cheese it, pard! Now you *air* a-tryin' to play it off on us!" he remarked.

"Do I look like a man who is fooling you?" asked Garvey, with agonising impatience. "I tell you it was I robbed Jake Brownson. I knew he was expected back from Caruthersville—that was not hard to find out—and I laid for him in the scrub on the Ridge. Then, as he drove past, I lassoed him from out the shadow, and pulled him on to the road. The fall knocked him insensible, and"—

"String him up!" yelled Pretty Pete. "He allows he did it, an' I reckon that's enuff for thesyer outoured chil'ren of natur. Hitch the blamed, thieving cuss up, an' I'll lay to empty my six-shooter inter him quicker'n any galoot ez is here present! I never did cotton to thesyer ink-slinging greasers ez comes browsing round with their high-falutin' palaver. The climate don't suit 'em, an' the kintry wants riddin' of 'em'—sentiments which found a ready echo among the crowd of roughs, who, with one accord, advanced to wreak their vengeance on the self-accused.

"I axes yer parding fur interfering with thisyer percession," serenely interposed Wagner, stepping in front of Garvey, and cocking his revolver in the face of the threatening throng;

'an' I'd jest like to observe, in a friendly, confidential sorter way, that you air a set of the durnedest, blithering idjets to suppose a Tenderfoot, milk-lappin' innercent, could get the drop on a bully boy like Jake Brownson! I allow I don't quite ketch on to thisyer game at bluff the Tenderfoot's a-playin' off agen us—but, mebbe, thet's 'cos I ain't seen his hand, an' it's not onpossible thet he may hev a ace or two up his sleeve.'

Just at this point the speaker was interrupted by a thud upon the ground close behind him, and the spectators set up a howl. Lemuel Garvey had fallen prone upon his face. The strain of excitement had snapped his slender cord of life, and the bright red blood spurted from his mouth and stained the ground. He had died with a lie upon his lips—but *what a lie!* Will it be found recorded against him?

'He's shammin'! Swing the skunk on his own confession!' yelled Pretty Pete, as the self-elected President of the Vigilance Committee turned the body over and felt in vain for the beating of the heart, and the cry was quickly taken up.

'You kin take it from me,' observed Buck threateningly, 'thet the pore innercent hez handed in his checks; an' ef any lop-eared greaser lays his dirty fingers on thisyer corpse, I'm on the shoot, an' don't you forgit it! Mr Lem Garvey was white—the whitest man we hed in these parts; an' ef you wanten know ez how I know he hedn't no hand in thisyer road-agentin' deal, I simply axes you how a Tenderfoot ez never handled a raw hide lariat in his life could throw one six yards—an' it must be a matter of thet, at the least, from outer the shadder o' the scrub to the middle of the track at the Ridge—unbeknownst to a rustler like Jake, an' yank him off'n his wagon fust time? It ain't possible—it ain't durned well possible, ez Jake hisself will tell you; an', more'n thet, I lay he'll lam any ornery idjet in Californy wot says it is. I calkerlate I'm gettin' the hang o' thisyer job a bit clearer. Now, why did the innercent let on thet he done thisyer thing, when he knowed no more'n a clam about it? It 'pears to me thet he knowed his claim in thisyer mine o' life was worked out, an' he hed get down purty well to the bed rock, an' couldn't stand the strain of waitin' to go up the flume in the usual manner. He hedn't the grit to put a gun to his head an' put hisself through sudden-like, so he jest jumps at thisyer chance o' gettin' a good send-off without it being a case of *feller-d'ye-see*. Howsomever, he's kicked the bucket this time; but he was a squar' man, pards; an' ez I've sorter bossed thisyer show so far, there ain't nothing mean about my style, an' I'll see it through.'

A murmur of conviction ran round the crowd; and as Buck Wagner carried the body inside the hut, locked the door on it, and slid the key into his pocket, they dispersed down the slope.

As Buck slowly and thoughtfully made his way down to Breckenridge City, he met Chaparral Dick, who, having heard a brief outline of what had happened from the foremost of the returning throng, was hurrying to the scene of death.

'Is he dead—clar dead?' he asked Buck anxiously.

'Clar,' responded the other.

'He was white, Buck! Don't you forgit thet!' exclaimed the rancher brokenly, with a vehemence of emotion he was never previously known to be capable of.

'Blame my cats ef the galoot ain't snivellin'!' Wagner murmured softly to himself. Then aloud he said: 'Yes, I believe he was white—whiter'n you an' me, pard—an' ez I've undertaken to see the job through, I'm a-goin' to do it regardless, an' in a fust-rate style sech ez is becomin' to sech ez him. It ain't goin' to be no slouch—scarsely. There ain't no reg'lar bone-yard handy; but we'll plant him up on the mounting yonder; an' we'll hev the gospel-sharp from Caruthersville to jerk out a leetle chin-music an' put him through bully!'

The next morning a curious thing happened. The bag of dollars was found among the straw in the bottom of Jake Brownson's wagon; which fact, notwithstanding the storekeeper's protestations to the contrary, convinced everybody that the whisky at Caruthersville had proved too much for Jake; that he had put the money in the wagon himself, and afterwards forgotten doing so; that he had tumbled into the road at the summit of the Ridge in a state of helplessness, and that the whole affair was nothing more than an accident.

All this happened ten years ago. Save in two hearts, the 'Tenderfoot Ink-slinger' is well nigh forgotten. His old shanty stands doorless and windowless on the mountain-side. Nobody has occupied it since. But close beside it there is a green mound under the shadow of the pine-trees; and to this spot, once a year, on the anniversary of the fatal day, come two persons to pay their tribute to the memory of a noble heart. And Chaparral Dick stands with bared head and bowed face, as his wife lays the wreath of yellow cactus and blue lion flowers on the mound; and no thought of jealousy touches him as he sees the tears The Flower lets fall on the grave of him who loved her so deeply that he was willing to give his life for her happiness.

ABOUT TELEGRAPHIC CODES AND CIPHER MESSAGES.

THE Telegraphic Code, now so essential an adjunct to the foreign correspondence department of every business house, may be regarded as the legitimate and lineal descendant of the curious and complicated Cipher by whose aid the statesman of a past age secured his correspondence from the gaze of the unauthorised. But while the principal object of the cipher was secrecy, the objective point of the compiler and user of the telegraphic code is economy, though considerations of strict privacy are not lost sight of.

The necessity for some means of minimising the heavy cost of cable despatches is one of those self-evident propositions that require no

emphasising. But for the telegraphic code, the cable would be as inaccessible to thousands of business people as the phonograph or any other of the high-priced developments of electric science. Yet it is an every-day occurrence for the officials at the cable offices to encounter members of the trading community to whom the existence of such an economiser as the telegraphic code comes as a surprising revelation. Cable clerks tell many amusing stories illustrative of the mingled prejudice and distrust manifested towards the use of a code by some people. There are many old-established mercantile houses, spending yearly hundreds of pounds on telegraphic communication with distant parts of the world, more than half of which might be saved by employing a code. But, from motives of old-fashioned conservatism, so difficult for the modern progressive mind to sympathise with, the principals prefer to adhere to the fully worded message, fondly believing that the extra length and cost will somehow ensure an immunity from mistake which they cannot conceive to be compatible with a message couched in few but meaningless trisyllables.

The constructive principle of an ordinary telegraphic code is very simple. The volume—necessarily large—consists of a collection of phrases and parts of sentences likely to be needed in framing a message. These phrases range from such essential colloquialisms as, 'I am not able'—'If you are'—'Has just arrived'—'To-morrow afternoon'—to a lengthened description of the parts of a ship, engine, or machine; names, quantities, and qualities of goods, or of any subject on which business people may find it necessary to use the cable. These sentences are arranged in dictionary order, and to each one is attached an arbitrary word, also running in alphabetical sequence for facility of reference. In coding a message, the sender first writes it out in full, then looks up in the code those phrases which most nearly express the same meaning, noting the code word standing for each particular phrase. A message would be made up somewhat as follows: 'We are not able to (accuracy) complete work in time (sardonic). Can you allow us (emulated) fortnight longer (estuaries).' The words in parentheses representing the phrases that precede them would be telegraphed, thus reducing a message of fifteen words to one of four—plus address. The saving in transmitting, say, to the Cape, Calcutta, or Melbourne at about eight, four, and nine shillings per word respectively, is too obvious to call for comment.

Nearly every leading business has its own code, specially adapted to its requirements. Shipping people generally use Scott's, a bulky volume, in which is to be found probably every phrase or combination of common phrases likely

to be needed in cabling despatches appertaining to shipping matters. A long message advising the owners of an accident to a vessel, detailing the parts damaged, extent of the injury, time and place of the occurrence, with probable cost and duration of repairs, may be cabled with two or three code-words. By the use of the Mining Code, another remarkable and exhaustive work, an engineer in Mexico can with two and even one word give his employers a detailed report of the progress of work, or describe with minuteness and accuracy a piece of required machinery. A popular code used by London stockbrokers enables their New York correspondents to keep them informed of the fluctuations of over forty or fifty leading American stocks in a message of three or four words only.

The ingenuity displayed by code-compilers in condensing a mass of detail into one word is often well-nigh marvellous. This species of code is known as the Combination. Its principle consists in dividing a subject into parts, giving each a number, then combining these several small numbers into one large one, and cabling it by means of its signal-word. Suppose, for example, the subject be an announcement of the arrival of a ship at a distant port, with a few details of the circumstances. The page of the code-book devoted to arrivals would be divided into, say, five columns. In each column are written ninety-nine phrases applicable to possible circumstances. Column 1 would contain the names of all the ships belonging to the firm, each being identified by a two-figure number (01 to 99). The second column would contain 99 phrases descriptive of some fact connected with the arrival, such as, 'Arrived two hours overdue,' 'In tow of harbour tug.' Each of the remaining columns is filled by likely phrases, similarly numbered, yielding 396 distinct statements regarding any one of the 99 vessels. In transmitting his message, the sender would pick from each column in turn a suitable sentence. Thus, from column 1, line 17, he would get the name of the vessel, *Seagull*; column 2, line 14 says, 'Arrived at noon'; column 3, line 21, 'Experienced bad weather; starboard lifeboat stove in'; column 4, line 36, 'Captain hurt, not seriously'; column 5, line 16, 'Ship leaves to-night.'

When this long report gets upon the cable, it is in the very abbreviated form of two words, 'elegantly buccaneer.' The receiver on consulting his code finds that the first word stands for 17,142; the second, for 13,616. He ticks these off into five groups of two figures each, and is thus supplied with the numbers of the five sentences that make up the message.

The demand for telegraphic codes should be very large, in view of the number published. The catalogue of a leading publisher who makes a specialty of codes contains a list of some hundreds of distinct works. In addition to this, a large business is done by several firms who supply private codes specially constructed to suit particular needs and businesses.

As might be supposed, inventors make strenuous efforts to produce the 'briefest and most economical code published;' and if the state-

ments of rival authors may be relied upon, there are many volumes in the market that possess this qualification. Unfortunately, extreme brevity is rarely compatible with accuracy; and it is an axiom in code construction that the greater the conciseness, the greater the task both of framing and translating a message.

The compiler of a really reliable and comprehensive code is met at the outset of his undertaking by a difficulty that, so far, has defied all attempts at solution beyond a certain point. Despite the fact that the rules of the cable companies permit him to lay under contribution eight languages, the total number of words that can be used with safety for coding purposes is only about 150,000. The reasons for this are twofold. First, the companies decline to permit the use of any code-word of more than ten letters; and it is dangerous to employ those having less than seven, owing to the difficulty of detecting an error in short words. Further, thousands, nay, hundreds of thousands of words are rejected because of the similarity of the telegraphic symbols that make up the letters. Figures are rarely telegraphed; the possibility of noting an error in a group of arbitrary figures is very remote. Should a letter or two be 'jumbled' in a code-word, there are various ways of correcting the mistake—the sense, the context, and reference to the code; but these guides do not apply to the case of figures. The only remedy for a suspected error is repetition of the message at an enhanced cost of fifty per cent. Numbers, therefore, are expressed by a code-word. Errors in the transmission of amounts of money are very rare. A banker's code contains words for every possible sum of money from one halfpenny up to hundreds of thousands of pounds; and the authors have exhibited great ingenuity in making a limited supply of words do very extensive service.

The advantages of a telegraphic code are often let pass by the general public, owing to the supposition that it is necessary for the receiver of a coded message to possess a copy of the code used. This is not always the case. Most of the cable companies will permit the use of their private codes on payment of a fee generally equal to the cost of telegraphing one or two words. They translate the message into code language—which may necessitate a slight variation on the original text—and transmit it to the station nearest the addressee, where the clerk retranslates it into its original form.

In their early days, some of the cable companies exercised a very shortsighted policy towards the users of codes. By imposing numerous vexatious restrictions, they attempted to compel the public to transmit their despatches in a fully worded form; and even now, one or two companies frequently exercise their right to demand the production of the customer's code-book before consenting to put a cipher message upon the wire. But experience is gradually convincing them that it is to their interest to facilitate instead of restricting the use of the cable, since the cheaper the rates, the greater the bulk of business they will have.

The cheapness of telegraphic despatches in Great Britain renders the use of a code

unnecessary, except when secrecy is an object; consequently, code messages do not cause much trouble to our post-office clerks, as they occasionally do to the officials of the cable offices.

THE LEGEND OF THE PHANTOM SHIP.

It is a somewhat singular fact that there is not a single European nation whose mariners do not share in the picturesque and romantic superstition that certain parts of the ocean are haunted by the Spectre of a Ship. The tradition is quite the best known among the lore of the sea. Poets have told the tale in rhythmic heroics; novelists have taken it for their plots; play-writers have dramatised it; and one of the most masterful of modern musicians has founded an opera upon the Old-world legend. Nor can we be permitted to doubt that such an ocean Phantom really does exist. For did not two royal princes see her with their own eyes as short a time ago as the 11th July 1881? Such testimony is not to be disputed by any loyal British subject. In the 'Cruise of the *Bacchante*' it is stated that, at four o'clock in the morning of the day just mentioned, 'The *Flying Dutchman* crossed our bows. A strange red light as of a phantom ship all aglow, in the midst of which light the masts, spars, and sails of a brig two hundred yards distant stood out in strong relief as she came up. . . . Thirteen persons altogether saw her; but whether it was *Van Diemen*, or the *Flying Dutchman*, or who else, must remain unknown.' The verisimilitude of the spectre is established convincingly by what happened to the unhappy sailor who first sighted her. 'At 10.45 A.M. the ordinary seaman who had this morning reported the *Flying Dutchman* fell from the foretopmast-crossrees and was smashed to atoms.'

The sighting of the phantom ship by the *Bacchante* had at least the effect of settling one vexed point, the question of her rig. She is a brig, that most homely and commonplace of all craft. The discovery is a little disappointing. The imagination, in picturing the *Flying Dutchman*, conjures up the portrait of a brave old seventeenth-century galleon, gaudy with yellow paint and tarnished gilt-work; a pink-shaped stern castellated into a poop-royal, and crowned atop with a great horn lantern; broad decks guarded by breast-high bulwarks, and flanked on either side by a row of quaint green-coated culverins and carronades; short masts with a great spread of yard, and embellished by huge barricaded tops; and manned by a little crowd of strange-looking Dutchmen, contemporaries of sturdy old Van Tromp; silent, inanimate, ghost-like: kept alive only by the terrible spell which rests upon the ill-fated vessel.

There are many versions of the famous legend of the *Flying Dutchman*. Quite recently, an American gentleman set himself the task of endeavouring to discover the paternity of the tradition, and who the Hollander was that brought upon himself and his companions such a miserable doom by his act of profanity. The result of his investigations would be extremely

interesting, but it does not appear that he has yet given them to the world. Perhaps the story has been nowhere better told than by Captain Marryat in the novel which he founded upon it. Cornelius Vanderdecken, a sea-captain of Amsterdam, coming home from Batavia, is much troubled by head-winds when off the Cape of Good Hope. Day after day he goes on struggling against the baffling weather without gaining a foot of ground. The sailors grow weary, the skipper impatient. Still the bleak sou'-wester continues to blow the old galliot steadily back. For nine dreary weeks this goes on; then a terrible fit of passion seizes Vanderdecken. He sinks down upon his knees, and raising his clenched fists to the heavens, curses the Deity for opposing him, swearing that he will weather the Cape yet in spite of the Divine will, though he should go on beating about until the Day of Judgment. As a punishment for this terrible impiety, he is doomed to go on sailing in the stormy seas east of Agulhas until the last trumpet shall sound, for ever struggling against head-winds in a vain effort to double the South African Cape. Such, in brief, is the legend of the Flying Dutchman, as it has been accepted by English-speaking sailors for many generations past. The rest is the creation of Marryat's imagination: the extirpation of Vanderdecken's sin by the lifelong devotion of his son Philip, and the ultimate crumbling away into thin air of the ship herself when Marryat had finished with her.

Bechstein, in the 'Deutsches Sagenbuch' gives the Dutch version of the phantom ship, which is totally dissimilar from our own, both as regards the name of its evil-minded hero, and the sin for which he was condemned to wander. 'Falkenberg,' he says, 'was a nobleman who murdered his brother and his bride in a fit of passion; and was therefore condemned to wander for ever towards the north. On arriving at the seashore he found awaiting him a boat, with a man in it, who said "Expectamus te." He entered the boat, attended by his good and his evil spirit, and went on board a spectral barque in the harbour. There he yet lingers, while the two spirits play at dice for his soul. For six hundred years has the ship been wandering the seas, and sailors still see her in the German Ocean sailing northward, without helm or steersman. She is painted gray, has coloured sails, a pale flag, and no crew. Flames come forth from her masthead at night.'

Another Dutch account of the old legend says that the skipper of the phantom ship was a native of Amsterdam, one Bernard Fokke, who lived in the seventeenth century. He was a daring, reckless seaman, who had the masts of his ship encased with iron to strengthen them and enable him to carry more sail. It is recorded that he sailed from Holland to the East Indies in ninety days; and in consequence of having made many wonderful voyages, came at last to be reputed a sorcerer, in league with the devil. In one voyage he disappeared for a while, having been spirited away by Satan, and on his return was condemned—the legend does not say by whom—to sail for ever the ocean between the southern capes with no

other crew than his boatswain, cook, and pilot. Many Dutch seamen believe that his vessel is still to be fallen in with in the Southern Ocean, and that, when he sights a ship, he will give chase for the purpose of coming alongside to ask questions. If these are not answered, all is well; but should those hailed be so injudicious as to make any reply, ill-luck is certain to befall them.

Although, perhaps, no version of the famous old nautical tradition is so quaint and full of a weird kind of romance as the English one, yet there are others which are wilder, and glow with a more lurid colour. The Germans particularly exhibit that quality of eerie fancifulness which enters into most of their lore in the stories they have of the phantom ship. They tell of a spectral ship, to be met with in remote ocean solitudes, whose portholes grin with skulls instead of the muzzles of cannon. She is commanded by a skeleton, who grips in his bony hand an hour-glass; and her crew is composed of the ghosts of desperate sinners. Any honest trader that chances to encounter this grisly apparition is doomed to founder. Coleridge took his idea of a death-ship, in the 'Ancient Mariner,' from an old German legend. She is a vessel that approaches without a breeze and without a tide, whose sails glance in the misty sunlight 'like restless gossamers;' and in her cabin Death plays at dice with the woman Nightmare for the possession of the mariner's crew. She wins, whistles thrice, and off shoots the spectre-barque.

In a volume of a German 'Morgenblätter' for the year 1824 is contained another story of a phantom ship. A lookout man sights and reports a vessel. When questioned concerning her, he says he saw a frigate in a faint haze of light, with a black captain, and a skeleton figure with a spear in its hand standing on the poop. Skeleton shapes noiselessly handled the cobweb-like sails and ropes. The only sound which he heard as the mysterious craft glided past was the word 'water.' The history of this strange ship seemed to be known to one of the sailors on board, who recounted it as follows: 'A rich Spaniard of Peru, one Don Lopez d'Aranda, dreamed he saw his son, Don Sandoval, who had sailed with his bride for Spain, on board his ship with a ghastly wound in his head, and pointing to his own form, bound to the mainmast of the vessel. Near him was water, just beyond his reach, and the fiendish crew were mocking him and refusing him drink. The crew had murdered the young couple for their gold; and the curse of the wandering Dutchman had descended upon them. They are still to be seen cruising off the entrance to the Rio de la Plata.'

The French version of the time-honoured legend is given by Jal, in his 'Scènes de la Vie Maritime.' He says: 'An unbelieving Dutch captain had vainly tried to round Cape Horn against a head gale. He swore he would do it; and when the gale increased, laughed at the fears of his crew, smoked his pipe, and drank his beer. He threw overboard some of them who tried to make him put into port. The Holy Ghost descended on the vessel; but he fired his pistol at it, and pierced his

own hand and paralysed his arm. He cursed God; and was then condemned by the apparition to navigate always, without putting into port, only having gall to drink, and red-hot iron to eat, and eternally to watch. He was to be the evil genius of the sea, to torment and punish sailors, the spectacle of his tempest-tossed barque to presage ill-fortune to the luckless beholder. He is the sender of white squalls, of all disasters, and of storms. Should he visit a ship, wine on board turns sour, and all food becomes beans—the sailors' particular aversion. Should he bring or send letters, none must touch them, or they are lost. He changes his appearance at will, and is seldom beheld twice under the same circumstances. His crew are all old sinners of the sea, marine thieves, cowards, murderers, and so forth. They toil and suffer eternally, and get but little to eat and drink. His ship is the true purgatory of the faithless and idle sailor.'

The old Norsemen had a curious and vague tradition of a phantom ship, which they called *Mannifaul*. The French maritime chronicler, Jal, gives an account of her; so likewise does Thorpe in his work on 'Northern Mythology.' She was so gigantic that her masts were taller than the highest mountains. The captain rode about on horseback delivering his orders. Sailors going aloft as boys came down respectable middle-aged men; and in the blocks about her rigging were dining-halls where they sustained life during their heavenward wanderings. When passing through the Strait of Dover on her way northward, she stuck; but the captain with ready invention ordered her sides to be liberally besmeared with soap, and she slipped through, leaving the cliffs of France and England white for ever afterwards. Down to within a century ago, this gigantic ship was known among English sailors by the name of *The Merry Dun of Dover*; but she seems quite to have disappeared from the maritime lore of this country. The seamen of Normandy still believe in her existence, and call her the *Chasse Froude*. They say that she is so immense that it takes her seven years to tack. On one occasion, in turning, her bowsprit swept away a whole battalion of soldiers from the Dover cliffs, whilst her stern boom was demolishing the forts of Calais. When she rolls, whales are tossed high and dry by the swell. Many extravagant particulars of this colossal fabric are given by Jal; and in 'Les Traditions Populaires' of Sébillot, exaggeration runs into wild absurdity.

The fishermen of Normandy have another picturesque legend, upon which Tom Hood founded his poem, 'The Phantom Boat of All-Souls' Night.' They believe that if their masses for the souls of their friends in purgatory are rejected, a ghostly barque will come gliding in to the harbour with a spectral crew of the souls of those who had been drowned at sea. People may recognise their lost ones amongst the grisly group; but at midnight a bell strikes, and the phantom vanishes in a wreath of smoke. In a local History of Dieppe it is stated that 'the watchman of the wharf sees a boat come within hail at midnight, and hastens to cast to it a rope; but in the same

instant, the boat disappears, and fearful cries are heard, which make the listener shudder, for they are recognised as the voices of sailors who perished at sea that year.' The same account says that this boat appears on the night of All-Saints' Day.

The French traditions of the phantom ship are indeed all very gruesome. The natives of Brittany tell of a great spectre vessel manned by huge human figures and gigantic dogs, which wanders ceaselessly about the oceans, never entering harbour or casting anchor. The crew are composed of the souls of men guilty in their lifetime of terrible crimes; and the dogs are demons in disguise, who take care that the unhappy wretches shall not have too comfortable a time. The orders in this dreaded fabric are delivered by means of great conch-shells, which seems a providential arrangement, since the noise made by them is so great as to be audible for leagues, and gives vessels a chance of avoiding contact with the fatal spectre. There is, however, nothing to be feared if an Ave is promptly repeated and the protection of Saint Anne d'Auray invoked.

The Italian legend is a local one, as old as the year 1339, when Venice was first wedded to the Adriatic by the ceremony of a ring being dropped over the prow of a gondola into its limpid blue waters. During a tempest, a fisherman was bid to row three mysterious men first to certain churches in the city, then out to the entrance of the port. The boatman with terror beheld a vast Saracen galley rushing in before the wind, crowded with most fearful-looking demons. The three men in his boat, however, caused her to founder before she could get near the city, thus saving Venice. When they stepped ashore again, one of them handed the waterman a ring, by means of which these three strangers were discovered to be St Mark, St Nicholas, and St George. Giorgione has painted this phantom vessel, with her crew of spectral demons leaping overboard, affrighted by the saints; and the picture may still be seen in the Venetian Academy.

The Icelanders have a superstition which they call 'Skipamal,' or the speaking ship. The idea is a pretty one. They conceive that utterances come forth from the motionless hulls of vessels; but few can understand the strange language. In a volume of Icelandic Legends compiled by Arnanson, a story is told of one who could interpret these singular sounds. He overheard a conversation between two ships one night. Said the first vessel: 'We have been long together, but to-morrow we must part.'

To which the other replied: 'Never. Thirty years now have we been together; we have grown old together; and when one is worn out, the other must lay by.'

Then continued the first ship: 'That will not really be so; for, although it is fair weather this evening, to-morrow morning will it be bad; and no one will go to sea but your captain, while I and all the other ships will remain. You will sail away, and nevermore come back, and our companionship is at an end.'

The other vessel replies: 'Never; for I will not stir from this spot.'

'But,' expostulates the first ship, 'you must : this is the last night of our companionship.'

'When you do not go, I will go not. The Evil One himself must take a hand in it else.'

Then the captain of the ship that was to sail came on board and ordered her to be got under way ; but the staunch old fabric would not stir, and his crew mutinied. He shipped a fresh one ; but they could not get the vessel out, and likewise rebelled. He called on the Deity—still without success ; then invoked the Evil One, upon which his vessel flew out into the raging storm, and was lost ; and her spectre still haunts the northern ocean, flitting pale and ghostly among the icebergs.

The Americans have many poems on the subject of the phantom ship. Whittier, in 'The Garrison of Cape Ann,' writes of

The spectre-ship of Salem, with the dead men in
her shrouds,
Sailing sheer above the water, in the loom of
morning clouds.

Again, his 'Wreck of the Schooner *Breeze*' is the story of a

Weird unspoken sail ;
She flits before no earthly blast,
With the red sign fluttering from her mast,
The ghost of the schooner *Breeze*.

Longfellow, in 'The Ship of the Dead,' embodies an old New-England tradition. The legend runs that a ship was sent to sea from New Haven one day in January 1647, but was nevermore heard of again. In the following June, just before sunset, a ship like her was beheld sailing up the river against the wind, slowly fading out until she vanished from view. The apparition was accepted as a premonition of the loss of the vessel.

Bret Harte, in his poem called 'A Greyport Legend,' relates a strange, wild superstition of the mariners of that town. The tale goes that a number of little children went on board a dimasted hull to play ; the wind rose ; the craft broke loose, drifted away to sea, and was lost.

When fogs are thick on the harbour reef,
The mackerel fishers shorten sail,
For the signal, they know, will bring relief,
For the voices of children, still at play,
In a phantom hulk that drifts away,
Through channels whose waters never fail.

Instances of traditions and superstitions founded upon the idea of a phantom ship might be multiplied until this article assumed the dimensions of a stout volume ; but want of space forbids that the list should be further extended. It is not difficult to conceive the paternity of the romantic old legend. The sudden disappearance of a distant ship through some subtle, imperceptible wreathing of mist upon the horizon, would be sufficient to suggest the notion of a spectral vessel. Herman Melville, in his admirable work 'Typee,' has a quaint idea, out of which might easily grow a tradition of a phantom ship. 'I heard,' he says, 'of one whaler which, after many years' absence, was given up for lost. The last that had been heard of her was a shadowy report of her having touched at some of those unstable islands in the far Pacific whose eccentric wanderings are carefully noted in each new

edition of the South Sea charts. After a long interval, however, the *Perseverance*—for that was her name—was spoken somewhere in the vicinity of the ends of the earth, cruising along as leisurely as ever, her sails all bepatched and bequilted with rope-yarns, her spars fished with old pipe-staves, and her rigging knotted and spliced in every possible direction. Her crew was composed of some twenty venerable Greenwich pensioner-looking old salts, who just managed to hobble about deck. The ends of all the running ropes, with the exception of the signal-halyards and poop-downhaul, were rove through snatch-blocks, and led to the capstan or windlass, so that not a yard was braced or a sail set without the assistance of machinery. Her hull was encrusted with barnacles, which completely encased her. . . . What eventually became of her, I never learned ; at any rate, she never reached home.'

Nor is the belief in the Flying Dutchman a superstition of the past. Sailors in this age give just as great credence to the ancient legend as they did a couple of centuries ago. Indeed, no race is more persistent in credulity than seamen. They continue to cling to traditions that have come down from mariners of a date when the ocean was still shrouded in mystery and romance. Friday's sailing is as unlucky as ever it was ; the St Elmo's Fire is yet full of significance ; and a Finn amongst the crew ruins the prospects of a voyage at the very outset. It will take many generations, even in this prosaic age of iron and steam, for the sailor to abandon his old beliefs ; and it may be safe to predict that the very last fragment of superstition he will be willing to give up will be the legend of the Phantom Ship.

A DOUBLE EVENT.

THE merles find Edens in scented hedges,
And sing in chorus the live-long day ;
The streamlet dances amid the sedges ;
The larks are loud, and the thrushes gay ;
The tall, white lilies bend o'er the river ;
Butterflies revel in clover seas ;
The green leaves ripple ; the corn-blades quiver ;
The stockdoves croon in the linden trees.
Creamy and pink are the wayside roses ;
The year is nearing its golden prime ;
Over the poppy the brown bee dozes ;
Breezes are fragrant with mint and thyme ;
Golden sunbeams keep tryst with shadows
Where the forest branches are closest wed ;
Marguerites grow in the spreading meadows
'Mid waving grasses and sorrel red.

The gorses blaze in the fells and hollows ;
The tranquil sea is a nether sky ;
In mazy circles the busy swallows
Round the lichened nests in the old wall fly ;
Purple and far are the hills of heather,
Lost in distance the mountains gray ;
Joyous are I and the earth together ;
My love and summer come back to-day.

M. ROCK.

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